

5.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

5.1 SCOPING PROCESS

FRA initiated the scoping process by publishing a NOI to prepare a Program EIS/EIR in the Federal Register on August 17, 2012. FRA is the lead federal agency, working jointly with SLOCOG as the lead state agency. The two agencies have prepared this Program EIS/EIR pursuant to the requirements of NEPA and CEQA.

SLOCOG held two scoping meetings as a part of the scoping process, as shown in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1 Scoping Meetings

Salinas	San Luis Obispo
Transportation Agency for Monterey County	San Luis Obispo City/County Library
55-B Plaza Circle	995 Palm Street
August 28, 2012, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	August 29, 2012, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

These meetings provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the scope of environmental topics that are analyzed in this Program EIS/EIR.

Approximately 25 people attended the scoping meetings and/or submitted comments during the scoping period. Sign in sheets were provided for attendees with the option of including a mailing/email address so that they could be added to the project mailing list. This list will be used to update the public and appropriate agencies on further public outreach/involvement opportunities, and to provide further information concerning the proposed project. Scoping meeting attendees were provided with comment cards to submit their comments on the project, and copies of the presentation given were made available for interested parties.

Representatives from SLOCOG, TAMC, and the consultant team presented an overview of the Coast Corridor Rail project, its components, and its purpose and need. They also described the environmental process and the issues to be studied in the Program EIS/EIR. Preceding and following the presentation, attendees were

welcomed to take part in an open house informal discussion of the project and review process with team members at various information stations with exhibit boards and aerial overview maps.

5.2 OTHER SCOPING MEETING NOTIFICATION

~~Federal Register/Notice of Intent~~

~~FRA published a notice of intent in the Federal Register on August 17, 2012.~~

Newspaper

Notices to the public briefly describing the proposed project and listing the dates and locations of the scoping meetings were published in local newspapers. These publications included the Salinas *Californian* (August 21, 2012), the San Luis Obispo *Tribune* (August 22, 2012) and *El Sol* (August 25, 2012). *El Sol* is a Spanish-language newspaper published in Salinas that covers Salinas and Monterey County.

Mailing

Over 6,000 postcard meeting notifications in both English and Spanish were distributed to residents within 500 feet of the corridor and 1,000 feet of the proposed new railroad stations (Soledad and King City). These mailers gave a brief explanation of the project and provided details on the dates, times, and locations of the Scoping Meetings.

5.3 FORMAL COMMENT SUMMARY

Scoping Meeting attendees were provided with comment sheets at the meeting and were asked to submit them that day or mail them to SLOCOG (1114 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401) or via email to coastcorridorscopingcomments@circlepoint.com by close of business September 10, 2012. All comments and questions, including those delivered orally at one of the scoping meetings and those provided in writing, are summarized and responded to below (Tables 5-2 and 5-3).

Table 5-2 August 28th - Salinas

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
Is this a real project? Has funding been identified?	Project attributes <u>components</u> and anticipated potential funding strategies will be discussed in the EIS/EIR - see discussion of Build Alternative, Chapter 2.0, Alternatives
Does the Federal government have some minimum level of projects that need to be approved?	The EIS/EIR will discuss all pertinent regulatory requirements. There is no minimum level of improvements that must be implemented.
How much will the ticket be from Salinas to San Francisco? San Francisco to Los Angeles?	Estimated fare information was not available as of the drafting of this EIS/EIR.

Table 5-3 August 29th - San Luis Obispo

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
Would you consider re-instituting the use of sidings—currently many are used for excess rail car storage. This is unsightly, and being used as a parking lot.	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all project components and how they were developed.
Besides the Cuesta Grade, what other curves are we looking at?	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all project components and how they were developed. Several other curve corrections are noted; the Cuesta area is the only segment where substantial second track is programmed.
Do we have the authority to take property via eminent domain?	The EIS/EIR will discuss the subsequent analyses and permits anticipated to be necessary for project implementation, including any needed land acquisition. As described in Chapter 2.0, Alternatives, the extent of actual physical improvements <u>components</u> to be implemented is not yet known, so the need for any specific property acquisition has not yet been determined.
Will the fiber optic cable that was laid a number of years ago be considered or disturbed?	The EIS/EIR will consider effects to existing utilities in the rail corridor, including communications infrastructure. See Section 3.8, Public Utilities and Services
Is the April 2015 service date firm?	The EIS/EIR will clarify anticipated project timeframes. The Final EIS/EIR is likely to be published in early 2015. Updated projections on service dates will be provided, as feasible.

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
What is the status of implementing positive train control? Will it be required?	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all of the anticipated physical improvements components .
What website will you use to provide updates?	www.slocog.org
Does the train own an easement next to the tracks?	The EIS/EIR will discuss the subsequent analyses and permits anticipated to be necessary for project implementation, including any needed land acquisition.
I would like to see a parallel bike path and trail.	The comment is noted.
Amtrak & UPRR—since UPRR is such a disinterested partner, why force the issue? Highway 101 has a good amount of Right of Way for an elevated train up the middle of the highway.	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all of the physical anticipated improvements components and their anticipated locations. This section will also discuss alternatives briefly considered but ultimately rejected from further analysis.
There is much to accomplish in terms of planning and actual work on the Coast Corridor. Eagerly awaiting the start of the Coast Daylight.	The comment is noted.
Pleased to see that much needed improvements will be made. These will serve residents and tourists.	The comment is noted.
This project is much needed, and adding stations between SLO and Salinas would be okay, but there should be at least one daily express run up and down the coast each way that skips most other stops.	The comment is noted.

5.4 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

As part of the public involvement and outreach process for the Coast Corridor Rail project environmental review, consultants assisting SLOCOG, TAMC, and Caltrans DOR made efforts to conduct project briefings with agencies and other stakeholders prioritized by SLOCOG and its partners. Below is a summary of briefings conducted between August 2012, ~~and November 2012, and May 2015~~. Also identified are agencies that were contacted and did not wish to receive a briefing, or did not respond to inquiries.

City of Soledad

The project team (SLOCOG, TAMC, Caltrans DOR, and assisting consultants) held a briefing with the Community and Economic Development Director of the City of Soledad ~~was held~~ in-person on August 28, 2012. Discussion topics included: the City of Soledad Downtown Specific Plan, station location, potential agriculture impacts if any access across the tracks is eliminated.

City of King

The project team held a briefing with the Community Development Director and staff ~~was conducted~~ in-person on August 29, 2012. Discussion topics included: purpose/result of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, coordination with Fort Hunter-Liggett, coordination with existing downtown planning efforts, coordination with UPRR, existing RailPro study. King City staff indicated concerns about the following topics: GHG emissions, multi-modal element, and the potential impact on commute patterns. King City staff also encouraged making the Draft Program EIS/EIR accessible to Spanish speakers, if feasible. Additionally, the project team met with the City of King in May 2015 to discuss the city's comments on the Draft Program EIS/EIR.

Monterey County Farm Bureau

The project team held a briefing ~~was held~~ via teleconference and webinar with the Monterey County Farm Bureau on October 17, 2012. Discussion topics included impacts to station locations, alignments, the environmental process schedule and impacts to agricultural land. The Farm Bureau reported at the end of the briefing that this information about the project was “not as alarming” as they had expected. They look forward to continued involvement in the project moving forward.

U.S. Army/Fort Hunter Liggett

The project team held a briefing ~~was conducted~~ via teleconference/webinar with command staff at Fort Hunter Liggett on November 13, 2012. Fort Hunter Liggett was not on the initial list of stakeholders, given its distance (20+ miles) from the corridor and the proposed King City station. However, staff at the City of King strongly urged outreach to Fort command staff. Discussion topics included train schedules and the location of the train station in San Francisco, and the potential for Coast Corridor service to connect with airports in San Jose and Burbank as a means of expanding access to and from the Fort. The stakeholders are supportive of the project and look forward to receiving project updates.

San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau

Contact attempts were made to the San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau, but were not returned.

Others Contacted but Declined Briefings

We Consultants assisting SLOCOG, TAMC, and Caltrans DOR have reached out to the following groups and found out that they were not interested in obtaining more information about the Coast Corridor Rail Project:

- Salinas Valley Chamber
- San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
- San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner

No Response

We Consultants also reached out to the following agencies to offer a briefing on the project, but did not receive a response:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- United States Forest Service: Santa Lucia unit of Los Padres National Forest¹

5.5 TRIBAL OUTREACH

The project team performed a Sacred Lands File and Native American Contacts List Request through the NAHC. On July 1, 2013, the NAHC responded to the records search, noting that the search indicated the possible presence of Native American traditional cultural place(s) in the proposed project area. NAHC recommended that tribal governments and individuals be contacted to determine potential impact of any cultural place(s), and follow up within two weeks of initial contact via telephone call. NAHC provided contact information for 25 individuals from several tribal organizations traditionally affiliated with lands in the project area.

In response to NAHC's request, and pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.2(c)(2)(ii)) FRA reached out to the identified individuals to advise about the project.

¹ As noted in Chapter 4, in August 2014 the consultant team preparing this document sought and obtained information from a ranger within US Forest Service regarding land uses in the vicinity of the Cuesta Grade/proposed second main line.

Initial contact was made via letter, sent certified mail on September 17, 2013. As recommended by NAHC, the project team made follow up phone calls to the tribal government contacts on September 24, 2013. All answered calls indicated receipt of FRA's letter.

5.6 OTHER AGENCY OUTREACH

The project team has worked closely with the California State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure that all necessary outreach processes occur to ensure to mitigate any potential disruption of historic properties.

Agency Conference Calls and Correspondence

- ~~Conference Call with FRA and Circlepoint, November 7, 2013~~
 - ~~Delivered updated outreach efforts report per SHPO's June recommendations.~~
- Email Correspondence ~~with~~ between SHPO and Circlepoint: October 3, 2013
 - SHPO acknowledged receipt of 9/3/2013 FRA letter initiating Section 106 consultation.
- Conference Call with Circlepoint, June 27, 2013
 - Discussed the background, purpose & need, and key stakeholders of the project, as well as the Tier 1 EIS/EIR.
 - Project team requested SHPO feedback on appropriate parameters for the Cultural Records search; SHPO supported ¼ mile buffer zone around project alignment as appropriate boundary for cultural resources analysis.
 - SHPO expressed importance of conducting NAHC consultation as early as possible.

5.7 DRAFT PROGRAM EIS/EIR DISTRIBUTION LIST

A Draft Program EIS/EIR was circulated to the public to provide an opportunity to review the EIR/EIS and provide comments. The comment period began November 14, 2014 and closed January 7, 2015. As previously described, scoping meetings were held to provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the scope of environmental topics that are analyzed in this Program EIS/EIR. Approximately 25 people attended the scoping meetings and/or submitted comments during the scoping period. Sign in sheets were provided for attendees with the option of including a mailing/email address so that they could be added to

the project mailing list. All persons, agencies, and organizations listed below were informed of the availability of and locations to obtain the Draft Program EIS/EIR, as well as the timing of the public review period. Libraries listed below have received both hardcopy and electronic copies of the Draft Program EIS/EIR document and appendices. Federal, state, and local agencies and other officials and organizations listed below have received a hard copy of the Summary and electronic copies of the document and appendices. All other people (approximately 6,000 addresses along the Corridor) have been mailed a notification that includes information on how to obtain a copy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, the timing for the public comment period, and notice on public hearing dates, times, and locations. This information was also conveyed in both English and Spanish language newspapers in the Corridor (the *Salinas Californian*, *El Sol*, and the *San Luis Obispo Tribune*).

The project team held four public meetings, in the cities of Salinas and Soledad on December 3, 2014, in the City of King on December 8, 2014, and in San Luis Obispo on January 7, 2015. The meetings began with a presentation by the team covering the project's purpose and need, the various project components, the project timeline, and next steps in the environmental review. Following the presentation, the public was invited to provide oral public comments, which are transcribed and included herein.

5.7.1 LIBRARY LOCATIONS

Monterey County

Salinas Public Library, 350 Lincoln Avenue, Salinas, CA 93901
Gonzales Branch Library, 851 5th Street, Gonzales, CA 93926
Soledad Branch Library, 401 Gabilan Drive, Soledad, CA 93960
Greenfield Branch Library, 315 El Camino Real, Greenfield, CA 93927

San Luis Obispo County

Paso Robles City Library, 1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446
Atascadero Public Library, 6850 Morro Road, Atascadero, CA 93422
San Luis Obispo City/County Library, 995 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

5.7.2 FEDERAL AGENCIES

U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Vallejo
U.S. Department of Army, Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, Los Angeles
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, San Francisco & Washington, D.C.

5.7.3 STATE AGENCIES

California Department of Transportation, Chief Deputy Director, Sacramento
California Department of Transportation, District 5, San Luis Obispo
California Environmental Protection Agency, Secretary for Environmental
Protection, Sacramento
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California State Parks
California State Water Resources Control Board

5.7.4 ELECTED OFFICIALS

Federal Elected Officials

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator for California
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator for California
The Honorable Sam Farr, 20th Congressional District
The Honorable Lois Capps, 24th Congressional District

State Elected Officials

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor
The Honorable Bill Monning, 17th Senate District
The Honorable Luis Alejo, 30th Assembly District
The Honorable Katcho Achadjian, 35th Assembly District

County and Local Officials

Mr. Louis Calcagno, Chair, Monterey County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Bruce Gibson, Chair, San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors

Mayors of Corridor Cities

The Honorable Mayor Joe Gunter, Salinas
The Honorable Mayor John Huerta, Greenfield
The Honorable Mayor Maria Orozco, Gonzales
The Honorable Mayor Fred Ledesma, Soledad
The Honorable Mayor Robert Cullen, King City
The Honorable Mayor Duane Picanco, Paso Robles
The Honorable Mayor Tom O'Malley, Atascadero
The Honorable Mayor Jan Howell Marx, San Luis Obispo

5.7.5 REGIONAL AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)
San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLO APCD)
San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority
Coast Rail Coordinating Council

5.7.6 ORGANIZATIONS

Amtrak, Public and Governmental Affairs, Oakland
Planning and Conservation League, Sacramento
Rail Passenger Association of California, San Francisco
Train Riders Association of California, Sacramento
Union Pacific Railroad, Sacramento

5.8 RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PROGRAM EIS/EIR

FRA and SLOCOG, as the lead federal and state agencies, received comments from elected officials, agencies and organizations, and individuals (**Table 5-5**) including comments received at four public meetings held in the cities of Salinas, Soledad, City of King, San Luis Obispo. The public was invited to provide oral public comments at these meetings, which are transcribed and included herein.

Many of the comments received were on the same topic or expressed similar concerns. Rather than repeat the same response to each of those comments, the lead agencies prepared the following “Master Responses,” each of which addresses broad issue areas or topics. The comment letters are included as **Appendix 2** of the Final Program EIS/EIR. If a Master Response was used to respond to an individual’s comment, the commenter is directed to that Master Response in the response section corresponding to their comment letter.²

² Although not presented in an underline format, all text in this chapter after Section 5.8 is new text since publication of the Public Draft Program EIS/EIR and includes the responses to public comments.

Table 5-4 Index of Master Responses

Number	Topic
1	Curve Realignments and Atascadero Water Resources in San Luis Obispo County
2	City of King Passenger Station; Siding Extension
3	Conceptual Nature of Proposed Components
4	Outreach Efforts
5	Coast Starlight Ridership

5.8.1 MASTER RESPONSES

Master Response 1: Curve Realignments in San Luis Obispo County

SLOCOG held a public hearing on the Coast Corridor Draft Program EIS/EIR as part of its board meeting on January 7, 2015. The main focus of the public comments was curve realignments proposed for various locations in San Luis Obispo County. Commenters stated that the curve realignments have the potential to result in property acquisitions, split parcels, and other adverse environmental and socioeconomic effects.

While SLOCOG retains discretion as to which, if any, rail improvement projects it will fund (including the curve realignments), the Board adopted a motion requesting SLOCOG staff drop from further consideration curve realignments in San Luis Obispo County. These are:

1. McKay/Wellsona
2. Wellsona/Paso Robles
3. Templeton/Henry
4. Henry/Santa Margarita

As reflected in the Preferred Alternative identified by FRA, SLOCOG, and Caltrans DOR, the Preferred Alternative does not include any of these San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. Therefore, these curve realignments are not eligible for FRA funding unless and until the curve realignments undergo separate NEPA review. It is further anticipated that SLOCOG as CEQA lead agency will adopt the Preferred Alternative as the approved project, thus depriving the curve realignments (outside the Preferred Alternative) from any CEQA clearance as a result of the Draft and Final Program EIS/EIR.

Exclusion of these curve realignments from the Preferred Alternative would not substantially compromise future on-time performance of passenger and freight trains as other improvements modeled by Caltrans were found to result in satisfactory performance. In its own modeling, UPRR identified a number of other improvements it deemed necessary to expand passenger service, which did not include these curve realignments. Excluding the curve realignments would eliminate or substantially reduce several potential adverse environmental effects, including:

- **Land Use:** The Preferred Alternative would require fewer property acquisitions than the Build Alternative.
- **Agricultural Lands:** The Preferred Alternative would require substantially less conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use than the Build Alternative.
- **Air Quality:** Construction-period emissions (fugitive dust, diesel equipment) would be lower under the Preferred Alternative than under the Build Alternative.
- **Noise and Vibration:** The Preferred Alternative would generally retain the existing railroad alignment through San Luis Obispo County. In the Build Alternative, the curve realignments would alter the railroad alignment closer to the location of sensitive receptors.

Additionally, several individual commenters and the Atascadero Mutual Water Company (AMWC) noted that two AMWC water wells in Atascadero were within the area surveyed for potential implementation of the Henry/Santa Margarita curve realignment. Exclusion of the Henry/Santa Margarita curve realignment from the Preferred Alternative would eliminate the need to acquire the land that includes these wells. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have no adverse effect on these wells. See **Section 3.8** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a detailed discussion.

SLOCOG as CEQA lead agency is anticipated to certify this EIR and follow by approving the Preferred Alternative as the proposed project. CEQA does not require SLOCOG to recirculate the Draft EIR in order to effect this change. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, a recirculation of an EIR prior to certification would only be required if a new significant impact were to be identified, the severity of a significant impact were to increase substantially, or a new mitigation measure is

added.³ As noted above, these changes would substantially reduce potential environmental effects of the Preferred Alternative when compared to the Build Alternative. For the purposes of this programmatic review, no new avoidance, minimization, or mitigation strategy is required as exclusion of the curve realignments because it serves to reduce potentially significant environmental impacts. Therefore, recirculation is not warranted.

Master Response 2: Changes Requested by the City of King following publication of the Draft EIS/EIR

The City of King provided extensive written comments on the Draft Program EIS/EIR, advising that the City had updated its draft plans for the City of King passenger station and the related siding extension since the publication of the Draft EIS/EIR.

Siding Extension

Draft EIS/EIR Analysis: As noted on page 2-9 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, no precise plans for new sidings or siding extensions had been identified when analysis for the Draft Program EIS/EIR commenced. Accordingly, the analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR made assumptions regarding existing sidings proposed to be extended. It was understood that sidings extension would result in sidings of 10,000 feet in length. The analysis in the Draft Program EIS/EIR assumed that this desired length could potentially be achieved by adding all needed track to either the northern or southern end of the siding. In effect, the Draft Program EIS/EIR examined a larger total area for the sidings than would have been necessary to achieve the desired 10,000 foot length.

The existing King City siding extends from MP 159.19 to MP 160.64, about 1.45 miles in length. The Draft Program EIS/EIR analyzed siding extensions between MP 158.5 and 159.19, and 160.64 and 161.19. Either the northern or southern extension would have been sufficient to result in a 10,000-foot-long siding.

Revised Draft Plans from City of King: As noted in the City's comments, the City of King engaged a railroad engineer (RailPros) to consider modifications to rail facilities in the area. The RailPros study prepared for and endorsed by the City of King proposed that the siding extension be greater than 10,000 feet in length and that

³ Similarly to CEQA Guidelines, the FRA Environmental Procedures (for NEPA) Section 13 (17)(e) states that if a significant change is made which would alter (worsen) environmental impacts, or where significant new information becomes available regarding an environmental impact, a supplement to the original Draft or Final EIS would be prepared. FRA determined that the removal of the curve realignments would not trigger a need to supplement the original Draft EIS.

the extension would most feasibly be achieved by extending the siding on the north side. The RailPros study considered extending the siding from MP 156.38 to 159.19, resulting in a siding 2.81 miles or about 14,800 feet in length.

Passenger Station

Draft Program EIS/EIR: As noted on page 2-11 of the Draft EIS/EIR, the analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR used conceptual plans from adopted City documents that proposed a station site near the intersection of First Street and Broadway. Operating details were assumed to include a station building, parking, and bus pull out areas.

Revised Draft Plans from City of King: As noted in the City's comments, the RailPros plan shows a similarly sized (slightly smaller) passenger station in generally the same part of downtown, with similar features, as well as an area set aside for military personnel transfers. The RailPros plan also calls for the relocation of an existing at-grade crossing (at Pearl Street) to move about one block to Broadway.⁴

The revised draft plans would have similar or lesser environmental effects as the plans analyzed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR and would not introduce any entirely new impacts or the need for new mitigation strategies. Based on the foregoing and the City of King's expressed interest in moving forward the revised draft plans (as expressed through several of the City's comments), the Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR reflects the relocated King City siding extension and the revised passenger station. The siding extension and the station area as analyzed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR as part of the Build Alternative are retained as part of the Build Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR.

Technical sections of the Final Program EIS/EIR include analysis of the Preferred Alternative and discuss the comparative effects of the No Build, Build, and Preferred Alternatives.

FRA has determined that no supplemental environmental documentation is required to effect these modifications. These modifications were requested by the local jurisdiction in which the improvements would be implemented and reduce potentially adverse environmental effects compared to that which was disclosed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation

⁴ Such a relocation would be subject to an approval by the California Public Utilities Commission.

strategies included in the Draft Program EIS/EIR remain relevant without modification to the Preferred Alternative and are incorporated in the Final Program EIS/EIR.

In terms of CEQA review, SLOCOG as the CEQA lead agency is anticipated to certify this EIR and follow by approving the Preferred Alternative as the proposed project. CEQA does not require SLOCOG to recirculate the Draft EIR in order to effect this change. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, recirculation of an EIR prior to certification would only be required if a new significant impact were to be identified, the severity of a significant impact were to increase substantially, or a new mitigation measure were to be added. As noted above, the changes requested by the City of King would substantially reduce several potential environmental impacts identified in the Draft Program EIS/EIR as part of the Build Alternative. No new significant impact has been identified. Existing avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies included in the Draft Program EIS/EIR and carried forward without modification into the Final Program EIS/EIR remain adequate to guide future project-level environmental review of any specific components of the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, recirculation is not warranted.

Master Response 3: Conceptual Nature of Build Alternative Components

Several individual commenters expressed concern that certification and approval of the Draft Program EIS/EIR would lead to immediate construction and operation of physical components and the associated environmental effects noted in the Draft Program EIS/EIR.

As discussed throughout the Draft Program EIS/EIR, the document represents a *program* level of environmental review. A Program environmental document is used to analyze broad conceptual alternatives to accomplish the goals of a project. In this case, the overall goals of the Coast Corridor Improvements Project are to enhance the existing rail corridor with safety improvements, increase rail capacity, increase on-time performance, etc. (see page 1-4 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR). As noted in the Draft Program EIS/EIR, there is substantial disagreement between the parties preparing this analysis and UPRR, the owner of the railroad, as to the extent of physical components needed to initiate expanded passenger rail service (Coast Daylight) amidst existing and projected future freight rail traffic.

Additional environmental review will be conducted at the project-level when specific project components are chosen to move forward. At that point, detailed plans for each component would be known and a project-level analysis would be

completed. Construction of the project components ultimately chosen to move forward will not begin until the certification and approval of the appropriate project-level environmental review.

The Coast Corridor Program EIS/EIR does not attempt to resolve the question of which components are needed. Rather, the action alternatives considered in the Program EIS/EIR include a wide variety of conceptual components promulgated over the last 15 years by a number of different parties (Amtrak, Caltrans, UPRR). This Program EIS/EIR provides an initial assessment of the types and magnitude of potential environmental effects that would likely occur from implementation of the physical components, and identifies a number of strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant impacts.

Since the proposed components are conceptual, by necessity, the Program EIS/EIR made informed assumptions regarding the size, location, and other elements of most components of the action alternatives.

To this end, the Draft Program EIS/EIR assumed generous “buffer” or envelope areas into which project components could ultimately occur. Buffers were up to 500 feet in some circumstances, although a typical railroad ROW area is 50 feet or less. For many components, the buffer “envelope” examined in the Draft Program EIS/EIR included up to many times more land than would ultimately need to be used to implement any specific components. The Program EIS/EIR analyzed potential impacts within these conservative envelopes in order to conduct a conservative or “worst-case” assessment and to allow for flexibility if the components location (identified only conceptually) were to shift as a result of future design studies/refinement efforts. Buffer areas should not be considered equal to the amount of land that would ultimately be used to implement a particular rail component.

Many commenters expressed concerns that their respective properties are located within these buffer areas and their property valuations have already or will decrease because the information in the Draft Program EIS/EIR purports a “pending” acquisition. As noted above, none of the components evaluated at the program-level include exact design/engineering plans and there is considerable uncertainty as to which if any components will ultimately be deemed necessary to implement. Additionally, the amount of land needed for any specific components will be far less than the “buffer” areas identified in the Program EIS/EIR for the purposes of the impact analysis.

These comments regarding potential decreases in property valuations were made by property owners in the vicinity of curve realignments in San Luis Obispo County. As discussed in Master Response 2 above, these curve realignments were not

carried forward into the Preferred Alternative. Assuming that SLOCOG similarly selects the Preferred Alternative as the approved project under CEQA, there would be no CEQA clearance for the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. The SDP was similarly revised to eliminate the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. They are no longer among the list of physical components to initiate and maintain passenger rail service (Coast Daylight).

Master Response 4: Outreach Efforts

Several commenters expressed concern and confusion about public notification of the project and the Draft Program EIS/EIR. Section 5.1 through 5.7 of this chapter summarizes the notification and outreach efforts that occurred for the project.

Master Response 5: Coast Starlight Ridership

A number of commenters asserted or questioned the level of ridership on the existing Coast Starlight trains in considering the merits of potential increases to passenger service in the corridor.

The existing Coast Starlight train service provides one daily round trip between Seattle and Los Angeles. **Table 3.1-6** in the Program EIS/EIR, **Section 3.1 (Traffic and Travel)** describes existing Coast Starlight ridership, as provided below. In 2012, the Coast Starlight carried just over 454,000 passengers.

Table 3.1-6 Coast Starlight Ridership: Existing and Forecast

Service	Existing Year 2012 (Seattle to Los Angeles)	Forecast Year 2020 (San Jose to San Luis Obispo)	Forecast Year 2040 (San Jose to San Luis Obispo)
Annual Ridership			
Coast Daylight	N/A	124,000	274,000
Coast Starlight	454,443 ¹	105,000	150,000
SUBTOTAL	454,443	229,000	424,000

¹ Ridership forecasts are available for the segment from San Jose to San Luis Obispo, existing ridership for the Coast Starlight is only reported for the entirety of the Coast Corridor (Seattle to Los Angeles).

Source: Caltrans Division of Rail, 2013b, Chapter 8; Amtrak, 2012b.

As described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR, **Chapter 1.0 (Purpose and Need)** the existing Coast Starlight is often fully booked during peak travel periods.

5.8.2 RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

This section provides responses to individual comments received during the public review period for the Draft Program EIS/EIR. **Table 5-5** lists the public agencies, private organizations and individuals who provided comments on the Draft Program EIS/EIR. Additionally, this section provides copies of written comments received, and responds to those comments. As discussed, multiple comments received on the Draft Program EIS/EIR raised the same topic or concern. Rather than repeat responses to duplicative comments, a comprehensive master response is provided in **Section 5.8.1, Master Responses**, and the commenter is referred to the applicable master response

As required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), these responses to comments address significant environmental issues raised by commenters during the review period (PRC Section 21091[d]; CEQA Guidelines §15088[a and 15132). The lead agencies have addressed concerns and suggestions regarding the adequacy and accuracy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR that were raised by commenters after the review period closed (PRC §21091[d]) and provided responses to all commenters prior to consideration of the Final EIR for certification (PRC §21092.5).

List of Commenters

Table 5-5 lists comments by elected officials, agencies and organizations, and individual members of the public. Comment letters are organized in the following order: state agencies, local agencies, and members of the public (individuals). An alpha-numeric indicator was assigned to each comment letter. The alpha indicator describes the commenter's organization (i.e., E = elected official, A = agencies/organizations, and I = individual) and the numeric indicator reflects the order the comment letter was received. Each individual comment (within a comment letter) is numbered to correspond to the alpha-numeric indicator (i.e., E-1.1, E-1.2, E-1.3, etc.). Accordingly, each response within this chapter corresponds to comment letter's alpha-numeric indicator. For example, Letter E-1, Comment E-1.1 is addressed in response E-1.1.

Table 5-5 Index of Comments

Number	Commenter
<i>Elected Officials - Oral Discussions at Public Hearings on the Draft Program EIS/EIR</i>	
E-1	City of King City Council
E-2	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Board of Directors

Number	Commenter
E-3	City of Soledad City Council
E-4	Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) Board of Directors
<i>Agencies/Organizations</i>	
A-1	Atascadero Mutual Water Company
A-2	California State Clearinghouse
A-3	City of King
A-4	San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
A-5	Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company
A-6	U.S. Department of Interior
A-7	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<i>Individuals</i>	
I-1	Bauke, John (oral comment – City of King, CA public hearing)
I-2	Bradley, Myrna (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-3	Brooks, Leanne (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-4	Claire, Paulette (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-5	Edgecombe, Anne
I-6	Edgecombe, Anne (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-7	Edgecombe, John
I-8	Edgecombe, John (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-9	Evans, Ellen
I-10	Giueici, Francis (oral comment – City of King, CA public hearing)
I-11	Gomes, Val (oral comment – Soledad, CA public hearing)
I-12	Greening, Eric (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-13	Hayden, Celine
I-14	Jensen, Ross (oral comment – Salinas, CA public hearing)
I-15	Kemp, Christine

Number	Commenter
I-16	Kemp, Christine (oral comment – Salinas, CA public hearing)
I-17	Kirkland, Gary (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-18	Lyon, Christopher (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-19	May, Rachel
I-20	McLoughlin, Arthur (oral comment – Salinas, CA public hearing)
I-21	Melendrez, Chantal Georis
I-22	Salter, Bettina (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)
I-23	Schneiderhan, Barbara
I-24	Thompson, Nancy
I-25	Veek, Edward (oral comment – Atascadero, CA public hearing)

Note: Notes from public hearings are included as **Appendix 2**. Comments that are not noted as oral comments, were written comments. Transcripts/summaries of oral comments are included in this chapter.

Source: Circlepoint, 2015

Responses to Comment E-1:

City of King City Council (oral discussion)

- E-1.1 As reflected in the transcription of the December 8 public hearing (refer to **Appendix 2**), members of the City of King City Council public asked factual questions about the project and the environmental review process. Staff from TAMC and SLOCOG responded directly to these questions at the same public hearing, as reflected in the transcript. The Councilmembers asked that these discussions be included in the record. None of the questions or comments addressed the adequacy of the environmental document or the characterization of any specific potential effect. No further response is required.

Responses to Letter E-2:

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Board of Directors (oral discussion)

- E-2.1 As reflected in the transcription of the January 7 public hearing (refer to **Appendix 2**), members of the SLOCOG Board asked factual questions about the project and the environmental review process. The main focus of the discussion was on curve realignments in San Luis Obispo County. As reflected in the minutes, this culminated in a motion to ask staff to remove the curve realignments from the document. As discussed in this Final Program EIS/EIR, the Preferred Alternative does not include any of the curve realignments in San Luis Obispo County that were part of the Build Alternative. None of the questions or comments addressed the adequacy of the environmental document or the characterization of any specific potential effect. No further response is required.

Responses to Comment E-3:

City of Soledad City Council (oral discussion)

- E-3.1 As reflected in the transcription of the December 3 public hearing (refer to **Appendix 2**), members of the City of Soledad City Council asked factual questions about the project, including existing Coast Starlight ridership and the potential benefits of the project. Staff from TAMC responded directly to all of these questions at the same public hearing, as reflected in the transcript. Master Response 5 provides regarding response to Coast Starlight ridership. None of the questions or comments addressed the adequacy of the environmental document or the characterization of any specific potential effect. No further response is required.

Responses to Comment E-4:

Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) Board of Directors (oral discussion)

- E-4.1 As reflected in the transcription of the December 3 public hearing (refer to **Appendix 2**), members of the TAMC Board asked factual questions about the project and the environmental review process. Staff from TAMC and SLOCOG responded directly to all questions at the same public hearing, as reflected in the transcript. Master Response 5 provides regarding response to Coast Starlight ridership. None of the questions or comments addressed the adequacy of the environmental document or the characterization of any specific potential effect. No further response is required.

Response to Comment Letter A-1: Atascadero Mutual Water Company

- A-1.1 The commenter asserts that the proposed Henry/Santa Margarita curve realignment could potentially affect two existing water well resources that serve 488 properties within the nearby area. See Master Response 1 regarding proposed curve realignments within San Luis Obispo County. The Preferred Alternative does not include the Henry/Santa Margarita curve realignment. Accordingly, the Preferred Alternative would have no effect on these two existing wells.

Response to Comment Letter A-2: California State Clearinghouse

- A-2.1 The commenter acknowledges that the lead CEQA agency has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for the Coast Corridor Draft Program EIS/EIR. No further response is necessary.

Responses to Comment Letter A-3: City of King, California

- A-3.i See Master Response 2.
- A-3.ii The City states “Participation by Fort Hunter-Liggett in the King City Station is not mentioned in the document.” Please refer to pages 5-4 through 5-5 (Stakeholder Outreach). These sections describe SLOCOG/TAMC’s meetings with the City of King and Fort Hunter-Liggett. The summary of the meetings reflects Fort Hunter-Liggett’s support for the project and potential use of City of King passenger station for troop movement. This comment does not result in any need to modify the text of the document nor does it identify any new environmental effects not previously disclosed. Also see Master Response 2.
- A-3.iii The description of the Preferred Alternative included in **Section 2.2.4.1**, page 2-18 in this Final Program EIS/EIR describes the relocation of the at-grade crossing at Pearl Street to Broadway Street to implement the City of King passenger station. Also see Master Response 2.
- A-3.iv See Master Response 2.
- A-3.1 See Master Response 2.
- A-3.2 The City notes the presence of fiber optic cables along the rail alignment within Monterey County and possible plans for a utility hub to be located in the City of King. Certain text in the Draft Program EIS/EIR was unclear on the full extent of existing fiber-optic cables alongside the rail corridor. **Section 3.8** of this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the text modifications in response to the comment.
- A-3.3 FRA and SLOCOG note the City’s preferred nomenclature. However, FRA and SLOCOG also acknowledge that among the general public the name “King City” is widely used and widely understood as the City’s name. To this end, several of the documents provided to FRA and SLOCOG by the City along with its comments use a mix of “King City” and “City of King” depending on circumstances (see comment A-3.4, A-3.22, etc.).
- Since the nomenclature has no bearing on any of the conclusions of the environmental document, FRA and SLOCOG see no need to make individual text revisions. However, this Final Program EIS/EIR uses the preferred term (“City of King”) where feasible.

- A-3.4 See Master Response 2, the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final Program EIS/EIR includes siding extension and station area plans reflecting the City of King's latest draft plans. **Chapter 2.0** of this Final Program EIS/EIR describes the Preferred Alternative; analysis in the individual sections of **Chapter 3.0** discusses impacts of the Preferred Alternative in comparison to the No Build and Build Alternatives.
- A-3.5 The City recites comments from a member of the public recorded during the scoping period for the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The City appears to interpret this scoping comment as a component of the Build Alternative. The action alternatives do not include any plan for long-term parking or storage of train cars at any location between Salinas and San Luis Obispo. The commenter is referred to a minimization strategy drafted specifically to reduce the potential for visual effects from sidings/siding extensions (see page 3.6-18 of the Final Program EIS/EIR).
- A-3.6 The City notes the need for an editorial clarification to text that summarizes the description of the No Build Alternative. **Chapter 2.0** of the Final Program EIS/EIR includes clarifying text that the No Build Alternative does not include any of the physical components associated with the Build or Preferred Alternatives. This clarifying text does not alter any of the conclusions of the environmental document.
- A-3.7 See response to comment A-3.ii.
- A-3.8 As reflected in Master Response 2, the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final Program EIS/EIR includes the City of King's latest draft passenger station and siding extension plans.
- See Master Response 2 for a more complete discussion of changes to the document resulting from FRA and SLOCOG's inclusion of the revised City of King siding extension.
- A-3.9 See Master Response 2 and the response to comment A-3.7.
- A-3.10 See Master Response 2.
- A-3.11 The City is correct that the existing Spreckels Road at-grade crossing is not located within the corporate limits of the City of King. The at-grade crossing is located approximately 3 miles north of the City of King. The City also states that the "Lyons Street" grade crossing should be named Bitterwater Road. **Chapter 2.0** and **Section 3.1, Traffic and Travel**, of this Final Program EIS/EIR reflects these modifications. These editorial clarifications do not have any bearing on any conclusion of the Program EIS/EIR.

A-3.12 See Master Response 2.

A-3.13 See Master Response 2.

A-3.14 The comment refers to page 3.1-13 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR; the full comment reads “Pearl Street/Broadway Street Crossing even without train station.” The City appears to imply that the description of the No Build Alternative in the traffic and transportation analysis should be revised. As discussed in **Chapter 2.0**, the RailPros plan also calls for the relocation of an existing at-grade crossing (at Pearl Street) to move about one block northwest to Broadway Street under the Preferred Alternative. However, the No Build Alternative in this Program EIS/EIR represents the continuation of existing passenger service, PTC systems, and signaling improvements. Therefore, implementation of the proposed passenger station and modifications to the at-grade crossings are not analyzed under the No Build Alternative.

A-3.15 and A-3.16

The City asks for confirmation of screening distances for noise and vibration analysis shown in **Tables 3.3-1 and 3.3-2** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. As stated in Master Response 2 and A-3.8 and A-3.11 above, FRA and SLOCOG did not receive the City of King’s revised draft siding or station area plans until presented as a comment on the Draft Program EIS/EIR. As reflected in Master Response 2, the Preferred Alternative incorporates the City’s revised draft plans for the siding and station area.

As noted in Master Response 2, the revised draft plans for the siding extension call for the extension to occur entirely to the north of the existing siding, including an area beyond the study area analyzed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. **Section 3.3** of this Final Program EIS/EIR includes analysis of the Preferred Alternative, including a discussion of how the relocated siding extension reduces environmental effects compared to the Build Alternative in the Draft Program EIS/EIR.

A-3.17 The City appears to state that “at-grade crossings” should be added to a partial list of project components that could result in construction-period noise effects. The cited list was not intended to be exhaustive but to merely list types of components that could result in noise or vibration during construction. FRA finds that the text’s discussion of potential construction period noise effects of the Build Alternative is adequate. No modification to the text is necessary, and none of the environmental conclusions in the Draft Program EIS/EIR require modification.

A-3.18 See response to comment A-3.15.

A-3.19 See response to comment A-3.15.

- A-3.20 The City is referred to **Section 3.10, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Table 3.10-2**, which lists potential historic architectural resources by element of the Build Alternative. This list of resources was developed from searches of relevant cultural resource databases. Page 3.10-14 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR states that these resources have not necessarily been deemed eligible for listing on any federal, state, or local register of historic resources, but are identified in this screening analysis as potentially eligible and appropriate for formal evaluation as warranted in one or more future project-level environmental reviews.
- The second part of this comment about the Coast Starlight appears to be an unrelated and possibly erroneous comment. Coast Starlight trains do not stop in the City of King nor is there any plan for those trains to stop there. No further response is necessary.
- A-3.21 The City asserts that Caltrans’s projections of ridership for the Coast Daylight “fail to include Fort Hunter-Liggett ridership demands.”
- Ridership estimates for the Coast Daylight were based on the SDP for the Coast Corridor. FRA and SLOCOG’s outreach to Fort Hunter-Liggett as part of the preparation of the Draft Program EIS/EIR found that the base primarily transports troops by bus from the Mineta San José International Airport (SJC) to the Fort. During the outreach meeting, Fort personnel expressed interest in moving troops via train, but the comment does not present evidence to FRA and SLOCOG with actual numbers of troops that might be transported by train. In the absence of data or other information that Caltrans’s ridership projections in the SDP Plan are in error, no modification to the energy analysis conclusions in the Draft Program EIS/EIR are warranted. Even accepting the proposition that the ridership estimates are understated, this would mean that potential energy benefits of the action alternatives are understated. Should more troops be transported by train instead of van, the region would see a greater the reduction in VMT and the corresponding reduction in energy use.
- A-3.22 While FRA and SLOCOG agree that it is laudable that the City of King has advanced its draft plans for its station area to include multi-model transit connections, there is no need to modify Minimization Measure TRA-6 in response to the comment. See Master Response 2.
- A-3.23 See Master Response 2 and the discussion of the environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative in **Section 3.5** of the Final Program EIS/EIR.
- A-3.24 See Master Response 2 and response A-3.23 above.
- A-3.25 The City asserts that avoidance strategy LU-1 is “not factual” because the City of King has advanced its draft plans for the passenger station and siding extension

beyond a schematic stage (and provided those plans to FRA and SLOCOG after publication of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, as noted in Master Response 2).

However, avoidance strategy LU-1 is broadly applicable to all elements of the action alternatives. The strategy suggests the need for careful planning to minimize the need for property acquisition and land use displacement. The City of King's revised draft plans for its passenger station and siding extension follow the spirit of this measure. While the "more than conceptual" status of the City's draft plans is acknowledged, FRA and SLOCOG note that the avoidance strategy remains applicable to the numerous other elements of the action alternatives and that this document remains a program-level evaluation. No modification to the text is warranted.

- A-3.26 The City notes that its revised draft plans for the passenger station (incorporated into the Preferred Alternative as noted in Master Response 2) reflect the intent of minimization strategy LU-4. FRA and SLOCOG appreciate that the City's revised draft station area plans reflect a high degree of sensitivity to potential community barrier impacts. FRA and SLOCOG note that the minimization strategy remains applicable to numerous other elements of the action alternatives and that this document remains a program-level evaluation. Because the minimization strategy applies to all of the components in the action alternatives, no modification to the minimization strategy is warranted by the comment.

A-3.27 and A-3.28

The City asserts a number of errors in **Figures 3.5-1c** and **3.5-2c** of the Program EIS/EIR. The asserted errors are entirely related to differences in the revised draft station area and siding extension plans that the City furnished to FRA and SLOCOG as a comment on the Draft Program EIS/EIR. See Master Response 2, the revised draft siding and station area plans have been incorporated into the Preferred Alternative, including analysis of these revised features, which is evaluated in this Final Program EIS/EIR. There is no change to the Build Alternative described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. Therefore, no revisions to **Figure 3.5-1c** and **3.5-2c** are warranted.

- A-3.29 See Master Response 2.

- A-3.30 See Master Response 2, and responses to comments A-3.15 and A-3.16, and the environmental consequences discussions of the Preferred Alternative in the Final Program EIS/EIR, which addresses the revised draft siding extension plans described in the comment. The cited text remains applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. Therefore, no modifications are warranted.

- A-3.31 See Master Response 2, which reflects that the Preferred Alternative incorporates the revised station area plan cited by the commenter. **Section 3.6** of the Final Program EIS/EIR includes analysis of the Preferred Alternative as a whole, which includes the revised station and siding extension plans prepared by the City of King.

It should be noted that the Final Program EIS/EIR remains programmatic in nature (see Master Response 3) and that future project-level environmental review of detailed plans is required prior to construction and operation of the components. The inclusion of the City of King's revised draft station area and siding extension plans is programmatic. NEPA and CEQA decisions for the Preferred Alternative will not eliminate the requirements for project-level analysis of the City of King station area and siding extension.

- A-3.32 The City appears to address text on page 3.3-16 (not 3.13-16 as cited) about noise. See the response to comments A-3.15 and A-3.16 above.

- A-3.33 The City appears to address text on page 3.5-16 (not 3.15.16 as cited) about environmental justice impacts. See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.5** of this Final Program EIS/EIR, in which the discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter.

- A-3.34 The City appears to note a City of King policy regarding trains on sidings with respect to minimization strategy VIS-3. The comment refers to Chapter 10.28 of the City of King Municipal Code, which seeks to prohibit any train from blocking any City of King street for more than 10 minutes. FRA notes that railroad operations are under the jurisdiction of federal law, not local ordinances.

- A-3.35 The City states that the photo on page 3.6-2 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR is "not representative of location of station." While the comment is acknowledged, the photo was not presented in the Draft Program EIS/EIR as a depiction of the station area; it is used to depict the visual landscape. As described in Master Response 3, the Program EIS/EIR evaluates a range of potential physical components at a conceptual level and future project-level analysis of specific project components will be conducted prior to construction and operation of these components.

- A-3.36 through A-3.38

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.7** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and

figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King.

A-3.39 and A-3.40

The City states that information about existing water and wastewater services for the City of King is “out of date.” The comment does not provide any updated information nor does the comment identify any specific deficiency in in description of the affected environment or environmental consequences. No further response is warranted.

A-3.41 through A-3.43

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.8** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King.

A-3.44 See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.9** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King.

A-3.45 As noted in Master Response 2, the revised draft plans for the City of King passenger station were not provided to FRA, SLOCOG, Caltrans DOR or TAMC until accompanied by this and other written comments on the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The comment notes that one of the changes inherent in the City’s revised draft plans would entail building demolition at a specific location. Page 3.9-6 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR expressly identifies the potential for Build Alternative components to “require the demolition of existing facilities or structures” and the potential to encounter “asbestos or lead-based paint materials.” The discussion goes on to note that subsequent project-level environmental analysis would determine the level of

risk and appropriate management/remediation efforts for any specific components carried forward. This is reinforced in minimization strategies HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, both of which are applicable to the Preferred Alternative, which includes the modified City of King station area plan.

A-3.46 and A-3.47

See the response to comment A-3.44.

A-3.48 through A-3.50

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.10** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft station area and siding plans cited by the commenter.

The Draft Program EIS/EIR discussion cited in the comment is applicable to the Build Alternative as described in the **Chapter 2.0** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King. As noted in the comment, the revised draft station area plan may require the acquisition/demolition of a building. The Draft Program EIS/EIR acknowledged the possibility of any station area requiring the potential demolition/relocation of historic buildings. The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies included in this Program EIS/EIR will inform subsequent project-level review of any components selected to move forward for implementation.

- A-3.51 The City states that one of the avoidance strategies for cultural resources does not include a determination of historical significance. However, **Section 3.10.6** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR and **Section 3.10.4** of the Final Program EIS/EIR discuss the anticipated approach for project-level review of individual components of the action alternatives. See Master Response 3 explaining the program-level analysis in this environmental review.

A-3.52 and A-3.53

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.11** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King.

A-3.54 through A3.58

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.12** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King. As noted in the comment and as reflected in **Section 3.12** of the Final Program EIS/EIR, the revised siding extension included in the Preferred Alternative would generally result in fewer hydrology and water resources impacts than the siding extension studied as part of the Build Alternative.

A-3.59 through A-3.63

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.13** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft siding extension plans cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King. As noted in the comment and as reflected in **Section 3.13** of the Final Program EIS/EIR, the revised siding extension included in the Preferred Alternative would generally result in fewer impacts to biological resources than the siding extension studied as part of the Build Alternative.

A-3.64 through A-3.66

See Master Response 2 and **Section 3.14** of this Final Program EIS/EIR for a discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative, which includes the revised draft station area plan cited by the commenter. The discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR cited in the comment remain applicable to the discussion of the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Preferred Alternative incorporates the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King. As noted in the comment and as reflected in **Section 3.14** of the Final Program EIS/EIR, the revised station area plan included in the Preferred Alternative would generally result in no difference in growth effects compared to the station area that was studied as part of the Build Alternative.

- A-3.67 The City states that the cumulative analysis did not specifically reference or incorporate an EIR certified by the City of King for the Downtown Addition Specific Plan Final EIR. FRA and SLOCOG modified the Final Program EIS/EIR to include this specific plan as part of the discussion of the potential cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative (see **Section 3.15** of this Final Program EIS/EIR). As noted in the comment, the Downtown Addition Specific Plan was contemplated with the assumption of the future implementation of a City of King passenger station. It calls for transit-oriented development to be constructed in proximity to the proposed passenger station. The Preferred Alternative in this Final Program EIS/EIR would be consistent with the adopted Downtown Addition Specific Plan.
- See Master Response 2 about the characteristics of the Preferred Alternative.
- A-3.68 The comment is acknowledged and **Section 3.15** of this Final Program EIS/EIR reflects the comment. The comment provides helpful additional information to readers, but does not identify any new or worsened environmental impact.
- A-3.69 The City states that the discussion of cumulative transportation/traffic effects “fails to include any discussion of the King City station.” The King City station is mentioned on page 3.15-9 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR as part of the suite of Build Alternative components. In addition, **Section 3.15** of the Final Program EIS/EIR includes a discussion of potential cumulative effects of the Preferred Alternative. The station is part of the larger project being evaluated for potential cumulative effects. No further response is warranted.
- A-3.70 See Master Response 2 and the responses to comments A-3.54 through A-3.58 above. As reflected in the discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative in **Section 3.12** of this Final Program EIS/EIR, the revised draft siding extension would avoid many of the hydrology/water resources impacts identified for the Build Alternative. **Section 3.15** of the Final Program EIS/EIR includes a discussion of potential cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative.
- A-3.71 See Master Response 2 and the responses to comments A-3.59 through A-3.63. As reflected in the discussion of environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative in **Section 3.13** in this Final Program EIS/EIR, the revised draft siding extension would avoid many of the biological resources impacts identified for the Build Alternative. **Section 3.15** of the Final Program EIS/EIR includes a discussion of potential cumulative effects of the Preferred Alternative.
- A-3.72 The City asserts incorrectly that the discussion of cumulative Build Alternative growth impacts in the Draft Program EIS/EIR “fails to include any discussion” of the City of King station area. The discussion on page 3.15-29 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR considers potential growth and transit-oriented development that could

occur as a result of the “proposed new stations” - referring to the Soledad and City of King components of the Build Alternative. The commenter asserts that greater beneficial impacts of the City of King passenger station may be realized. The Government Accountability Office study cited in the comment is notable for examining transit-oriented development in several major metropolitan areas of the US, including greater San Francisco, Washington D.C., Houston, Charlotte, and Baltimore, among others. The study notes that one of the key elements of successful transit-oriented development is “efficient access to jobs and centers of activity.” While FRA and SLOCOG applaud the City of King’s efforts to encourage transit-oriented development, the distance of the City of King from major job and activity centers are likely to limit the potential for substantial amounts of transit-oriented development in the vicinity. However, as noted on page 3.15-29 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, there is potential for more visitor-serving growth to occur around the station area. Notwithstanding all of the foregoing, project-level environmental review will evaluate the potential for any component of the Preferred Alternative carried forward to result in adverse or beneficial growth effects.

A-3.73 through A-3.76

The discussion in **Section 3.17** of this Final Program EIS/EIR has been expanded to include a summary discussion of the Preferred Alternative. Consistent with the comment’s assertion, the additional discussion in **Section 3.17** concludes that the Preferred Alternative would result in fewer unavoidable adverse impacts than were identified for the Build Alternative.

Because the Final Program EIS/EIR remains a program-level review (see Master Response 3), subsequent project-level environmental review of any specific components carried forward for construction is assumed. Moreover, text on page 3.17-1 of this Final Program EIS/EIR states that at the program level, it is assumed that any potential impacts identified may be avoided or minimized through design refinements. FRA and SLOCOG understand that the revised draft plans submitted by the City of King with its comments on the Draft Program EIS/EIR are just that - revised draft plans, potentially subject to further refinement and then, as appropriate, project-level review under CEQA and/or NEPA.

A-3.77 through A-3.79

The City restates comments made in several previous comments, including A-3.73 and A-3.54 through A-3.58. See responses to those comments and Master Responses 2 and 3.

A-3.80 and A-3.81

The City refers to summary descriptions of the Build Alternative included in the Section 4(f) evaluation as part of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. This Final Program EIS/EIR expands the Section 4(f) evaluation to include a discussion of potential effects of the Preferred Alternative (see Master Response 2). The cited discussion and figures from the Draft Program EIS/EIR remain applicable to the Build Alternative as described in the Draft Program EIS/EIR.

Responses to Comment Letter A-4: San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District

- A-4.1 The commenter refers to potential beneficial impact of the Build Alternative as noted in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. FRA and SLOCOG note that the Preferred Alternative would result in similar beneficial impacts. No further response is warranted.
- A-4.2 The commenter recommends that future implementation of the project consider promoting services like the SLO Car Free program as a further means to reduce regional (VMT and emissions of air pollution. The comment is noted.
- A-4.3 The commenter suggests inclusion of additional information about construction emissions. As noted in **Section 3.2.2** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, the extent of physical components that may actually move forward to construction is unknown. Moreover, the Build Alternative components are generally conceptual in nature, and precise estimates of construction period emissions separately as well as collectively would be speculative.
- Section 3.2.2** of the Draft EIS/EIR states that project-level analysis will be necessary to evaluate any specific components, consistent with the APCD's procedures as set forth in its CEQA Handbook and potentially also with General Conformity Requirements under the Federal Clean Air Act. FRA and SLOCOG agree that any project-level review should incorporate on-site mitigation to the greatest extent feasible. Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation strategies included in **Section 3.2.5** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR are generally consistent with the APCD construction phase mitigation measures and can serve as the basis for project-level avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in subsequent environmental documentation.
- See Master Response 3 explaining the programmatic nature of this environmental review.
- A-4.4 The commenter suggests the potential need for future project-level review of diesel particulate matter emissions and the incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures. As noted in **Section 3.2.6**, the Draft EIS/EIR identifies a health risk assessment as a likely element of future project-level environmental reviews.
- A-4.5 See the response to comment A-4.3.

- A-4.6 The commenter cites state regulations about naturally occurring asbestos. FRA and SLOCOG understand that any components of the Preferred Alternative that may be carried forward for construction will be subject to these and all other pertinent regulatory requirements. Project-level environmental review will be necessary to determine if adherence to these requirements would be sufficient in controlling potential exposure to naturally occurring asbestos or if additional, project-specific mitigation would be necessary.
- A-4.7 The commenter cites federal regulations about demolition activities that could expose asbestos containing material. FRA and SLOCOG agree with the commenter that this is a pertinent regulation to which components of the action alternatives would be subject as any one or more moves forward for construction. The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies in **Section 3.9.3** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR also require surveys of structures prior to demolition, grading, or construction.
- A-4.8 The commenter asserts that construction can generate fugitive dust and suggests inclusion of additional information regarding construction emissions mitigation strategies. Both the Draft and Final Program EIS/EIR disclose potential construction-period impacts, including fugitive dust emissions, exhaust emissions, and evaporative emissions. As discussed in response to comment A-4.3, the extent of components that will actually move forward to construction is unknown; therefore, it is premature at the program level to calculate construction period emissions. FRA and SLOCOG agree that any project-level review should incorporate on-site mitigation to the greatest extent feasible.
- A-4.9 The commenter asserts that idling limitations for diesel engines could help reduce the emissions impact of diesel locomotives. Accordingly, idling control techniques could be implemented to help reduce impacts, especially within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors. It should be noted that a key objective of the action alternatives is to reduce emissions and increase overall operational efficiency, as discussed on page 3.2-18 of the Final Program EIS/EIR. Therefore, proposed siding extensions and new sidings and other components included in the action alternatives would help to reduce idling time of trains in some areas.
- A-4.10 The commenter cites minor factual errors regarding ambient air quality standards for ozone within San Luis Obispo County shown in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. These errors do not affect the analysis in the Draft Program EIS/EIR, but merely clarify that the eastern portion of the County (which does not include the Coast Corridor) is in non-attainment for certain air pollutants. Please see **Section 3.2.1** of the Final Program EIS/EIR where these modifications have been implemented.

Responses to Comment Letter A-5: Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company

- A-5.1 The commenter asserts that the Draft Program EIS/EIR does not accurately capture the investment UPRR has made to maintain safety and reliability within the past several decades. FRA and SLOCOG agree that UPRR has made steady improvements to the rail infrastructure and acknowledge these efforts in **Chapter 2.0, Alternatives**, page 2-7 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR: “The UPRR has made and continues to make infrastructure upgrades consistent with FRA Standards.”

However, the existing Coast Corridor continues to be characterized by single-track operations with short (or limited) sidings, manually-thrown switches, and inefficient automatic block system (ABS) signaling system. Collectively, these conditions contribute to lower speeds and safety concerns.

- A-5.2 The commenter takes issue with an assertion that freight rail volume in the project area (Salinas to San Luis Obispo) is relatively low since the Coast Corridor is considered a “secondary” or “relief” line to UPRR’s Central Valley line. The commenter further notes that the Santa Maria Valley Railroad interchanges only with the Coast Corridor (about 25 miles south of San Luis Obispo) and that requests to UPRR for Santa Maria Valley Railroad to receive railcars from the north have been denied.

The Draft Program EIS/EIR considered freight rail traffic as reported in the SDP. The SDP reported on and analyzed freight traffic north of San Luis Obispo. Moreover, as acknowledged on page 1-1 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, the portion of the Coast Corridor south of San Luis Obispo is part of the Pacific Surfliner or “LOSSAN” corridor, with different patterns of train traffic than points north of San Luis Obispo.

The Draft Program EIS/EIR considered the potential for cumulative effects to occur from projected future growth in freight rail traffic, including the Phillips 66 rail spur project that the commenter cites. Please see **Section 3.15** of this Final Program EIS/EIR (Cumulative Analysis) for an updated discussion, including potential cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative.

- A-5.3 FRA and SLOCOG acknowledge the commenter's statement that Santa Maria Valley Railroad hopes to expand its operations and facilities along its ROW. The commenter cites one project that would rebuild part of the San Luis Obispo rail yard to create a facility that would include a maintenance facility and a private passenger car storage area, among other components. The commenter asserts that if created this project would have a direct and positive impact on passenger rail ridership. Given the programmatic level of analysis in this environmental document, FRA and SLOCOG included Santa Maria Valley Railroad expansion within the cumulative projects list shown in this Final Program EIS/EIR to ensure that any future, project-level environmental reviews take into consideration as appropriate any specific expansion projects undertaken by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad that could increase rail traffic on the Coast Corridor.
- A-5.4 The commenter states that it would like to see adequate capacity built into the line to accommodate rising freight traffic. See **Chapter 1.0, Purpose and Need**, of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. While the project is expressly focused on expanding *passenger* rail service, the Program EIS/EIR and the SDP acknowledge potential growth in freight traffic along the Coast Corridor by the year 2040. Freight rail traffic growth has been considered in the analyses in both this Program EIS/EIR and the SDP. Future project-level environmental reviews will revisit freight rail growth projections.

Responses to Comment Letter A-6: U.S. Department of Interior

- A-6.1 The comment affirms that the Department of the Interior has reviewed the Coast Corridor Draft Program EIS/EIR and has no comments. No response is necessary.

Responses to Comment Letter A-7: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- A-7.1 The commenter requests that a copy of the Coast Corridor Final Program EIS/EIR and associated future project-level environmental documents. A copy of the Coast Corridor Final Program EIS/EIR will be distributed to this address (and all other agency/organizations that commented on the Draft Program EIS/EIR).
- A-7.2 The commenter recommends that FRA and SLOCOG use the existing memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the *National Environmental Policy Act/Clean Water Act Section 404/408 Integration Process for the California High-Speed Train Program Memorandum of Understanding* between EPA, USACE, FRA, and the Authority as a model for project-level coordination for the Section 404 permitting process.
- Future project-level environmental review will include the consideration of required mitigation to offset impacts to jurisdictional Waters of the United States. FRA and SLOCOG will reference the Final Regional Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Guidelines established by the USACE South Pacific Division (December 31, 2014), as EPA notes.
- A-7.3 The commenter recommends that FRA and SLOCOG commit to meeting or exceeding the EPA Tier IV non-road engine emissions standard for construction of any of the physical components. As the commenter previously states, the physical components analyzed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR are conceptual. Therefore, the construction equipment that would be used is not known at this time. Future project-level environmental documentation will include more detailed construction information and design plans. At that time, it will be possible to evaluate the feasibility of using Tier IV standards based on the type of physical component, intensity of construction activities, and location. FRA and SLOCOG note this recommendation and will take the EPA Tier IV non-road engine emissions standard into consideration during future environmental documentation.
- Additionally, the commenter recommends that FRA and SLOCOG explore the possibility of electrifying the Coast Corridor rail alignment. **Chapter 2.0** includes a brief description of alternatives that were considered but dismissed from further analysis due to cost, likely significant environmental impacts, or overall feasibility. Electrification of the Corridor, along with express buses, increased air travel, and other passenger stations, were among the alternatives considered.
- A-7.4 The commenter cites the rail spur extension to the Philips 66 Nipomo Mesa oil refinery proposed in San Luis Obispo County, as discussed on page 1-3 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. This project would potentially allow for the transport of 5 trains of

80 cars of crude oil per week. The commenter recommends that the environmental document describe how physical components of the Build Alternative will increase public safety with respect to transportation of hazardous materials along the Coast Corridor. Additionally, the commenter requests a discussion of the Build Alternative and No Build Alternative would enhance public safety within the Corridor. Public safety considerations for both the No Build and action alternatives are discussed in **Section 1.2.2, Need**.

The commenter cites two NTSB safety recommendations regarding rail transport. FRA notes that the two cited recommendations call for a variety of actions pertinent to the movement of oil or other hazardous materials by rail. These recommendations include consideration of the rerouting of trains carrying flammable materials away from populated and sensitive areas; auditing the response plans of rail carriers of petroleum products to ensure adequate safety and security plans are in place. These recommendations are targeted at rail carriers of oil products or other hazardous materials; they do not include any specific recommendations about the physical components of the rail system.

Chapter 1.0, Purpose and Need, of the Draft Program EIS/EIR discusses the main challenges on the Coast Corridor. Page 1-7 describes the necessity for safety components. Moreover, one of the express purposes of the project is to allow for expanded passenger service without substantial disruption to existing and projected future freight operations. FRA and SLOCOG concur that any freight moved on the Coast Corridor is subject to a variety of regulations regarding transport and emergency response. However, none of the physical components being considered are being considered for the purpose of transport of crude oil and other substances. Neither FRA nor SLOCOG can speak to freight provider's consistency with the referenced safety and spill response rules other than to say they freight railroads are expected to comply with all applicable regulations. For the Philips 66 rail spur project, the consistency analysis would be provided in its project-level environmental documentation.

- A-7.5 The commenter encourages proposed new passenger stations to incorporate multimodal connections and livability. As the commenter notes, both cities have included plans for these stations in city planning documents and support rail, bus, bicycle, and passenger connections. In particular, the proposed City of King station is adjacent to the Downtown Addition Specific Plan area that is being planned by the City to capitalize on its proximity to the rail station. The City of King station would provide a transit link for US Army members to the Fort Hunter-Liggett base.

Responses to Comment I-1:

Baucke, John (oral comment)

- I-1.1 In oral comments at the December 9, 2015 public hearing, the commenter cites City of King efforts to advance conceptual plans for its station and that these efforts were not accurately portrayed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. As reflected in the meeting transcript, SLOCOG staff addressed the commenter's points during the same public hearing. Notably, the commenter raises several points similar to those in the City of King's written comment letter (which is A-3 of this response to comments document). Responses to the City's comments are included in this Chapter, as well in Master Response 2.

Responses to Comment I-2:

Bradley, Myrna (oral comment)

- I-2.1 The commenter expresses concern that the Build Alternative would require acquisition of private property. As reflected in Master Responses 1 and 3, the component of concern to the commenter (a curve realignment in San Luis Obispo County) is not part of the Preferred Alternative.

Responses to Comment I-3:

Brooks, Leanne (oral comment)

- I-3.1 The commenter expresses concern that the Build Alternative would require the acquisition of private property. As reflected in Master Responses 1 and 3, the component of concern to the commenter (a curve realignment in San Luis Obispo County) is not part of the Preferred Alternative.

Responses to Comment I-4:

Claire, Paulette (oral comment)

- I-4.1 See Master Response 4 about public outreach efforts undertaken since August 2012 as part of the NEPA/CEQA review.
- I-4.2 The commenter expresses concern that the Build Alternative would require the acquisition of private property. As reflected in Master Responses 1 and 3, the component of concern to the commenter (a curve realignment in San Luis Obispo County) is not part of the Preferred Alternative.

Responses to Comment I-5:

Edgecombe, Anne

- I-5.1 The commenter questions the public comment period and efforts to notify the public. See Master Response 4 for clarification about public outreach efforts conducted pursuant to CEQA and NEPA.
- I-5.2 The commenter expresses concern that the Build Alternative to require the acquisition of private property. As reflected in Master Responses 1 and 3, the component of concern to the commenter (a curve realignment in San Luis Obispo County) is not part of the Preferred Alternative.

Responses to Comment I-6:

Edgecombe, Anne (oral comments)

- I-6.1 The commenter questions the public comment period and efforts to notify the public. See Master Response 4 about public outreach efforts conducted pursuant to CEQA and NEPA.
- I-6.2 The commenter asserts that the Draft Program EIS/EIR has resulted in or will result in lowering assessed values of properties in the vicinity of certain components of the Build Alternative. See Master Response 3.

Responses to Comment I-7:

Edgecombe, John

I-7.1 See Master Response 3.

I-7.2 and I-7.3

The commenter states that a portion of the buffer area identified as a potential location for part of the multiple-segmented Henry-Santa Margarita curve realignment is located within a flood hazard zone. This statement is consistent with conclusions of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, as reflected in Table 3.12-2. The commenter further asserts that some of the buffer area includes wells operated by the Atascadero Mutual Water Company.

As noted in Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments including the referenced curve realignment at Henry-Santa Margarita. The Preferred Alternative would not result in any of the adverse impacts identified by the commenter.

I-7.3 The commenter notes that the Henry-Santa Margarita curve realignment was not projected to substantially increase the range of top train speeds through this area. As noted in Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA and SLOCOG excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments, including the referenced one at Henry-Santa Margarita.

I-7.4 The commenter questions the top train speeds made in the SDP, the Amtrak 20-Year Plan, and UPRR's 2011 recommendations for improvements to the Corridor. The commenter asserts that certain excerpts from the SDP about speeds and railroad classifications are erroneous.

FRA and SLOCOG appreciate these detailed remarks. The commenter does not have a specific comment on the adequacy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The Draft Program EIS/EIR provides a screening-level evaluation of the conceptual physical components identified in the Amtrak 20-Year Plan and in UPRR's 2011 recommendations. It should also be noted that the Amtrak 20-Year Plan (prepared in 2001) assumed higher top speeds in the Coast Corridor than are now planned as part of the SDP. Specifically, the SDP assumes components to maintain the Coast Corridor as an FRA Class IV railroad, which establishes a top speed of 90 mph for passenger trains. As correctly asserted by the commenter, potential increases in allowable top speeds throughout the Corridor would require substantial railroad

modifications and specialized train equipment. As discussed throughout the Draft Program EIS/EIR, there is uncertainty regarding which (if any) of the identified physical components will accommodate additional passenger rail service without resulting in delays to freight rail operations.

- I-7.5 The commenter notes that proposed curve realignments would be of limited benefit to freight rail operations. See the response to comment I-7.4 above and Master Response 1.
- I-7.6 The commenter notes that the potential for increased rail movement of oil from North Dakota would not necessarily influence UPRR towards the construction of curve realignments. See the responses to comments I-7.4 and I-7.5 above.
- I-7.7 The commenter questions the need for rail service components along the Coast Corridor in light of the ongoing CA HSR project under construction in the Central Valley. See **Section 1.4** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, which describes the relationship between Coast Corridor and the CA HSR system.
- I-7.8 The commenter notes that sales of electric cars are increasing so it is possible in the future that train travel (assuming diesel locomotives) might not produce the air quality and/or energy savings benefits identified in the Draft Program EIS/EIR. The assertions are noted but are based s on speculation about the percentage of fleet vehicles that would need to change from gasoline-powered to electric-powered in order to reduce mobile-source (tailpipe) emissions. Moreover, while electric-powered vehicles do not have tailpipe emissions, these vehicles require electric charging; electricity generation requires consumption of fossil fuels whose combustion results in air pollutant emissions. In California as of 2013, about 52 percent of all electricity generated was from natural gas and coal-fired power plants.⁵
- I-7.9 See the response to comment I-7.7 above.
- I-7.10 The commenter refers to existing conditions along the railroad near property the commenter owns. The comment is noted. It does not address the adequacy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. No response is required. The information offered is noted for the record.

⁵ California Energy Almanac, 2014, accessed January 27, 2015 at http://energyalmanac.ca.gov/electricity/total_system_power.html

Responses to Comment I-8:

Edgecombe, John (oral comment)

- I-8.1 The commenter orally restated several of the comments he provided in written form (comment I-7 above). See Master Responses 1 and 3 and the responses to comments I-7.1 through I-7.10 above.

Responses to Comment I-9:

Evans, Ellen

- I-9.1 The commenter asserts that the Draft Program EIS/EIR has resulted in or will result in lowering assessed values of properties in the vicinity of a curve realignment that, if constructed, could require property acquisition outside the railroad ROW. As noted in Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. See also Master Response 3.

Responses to Comment I-10:

Giueici, Francis (oral comment)

- I-10.1 The commenter states that his company owns a property that may be potentially impacted by one of the physical components included as part of the Build Alternative. See Master Response 3. Additionally, the commenter wishes to be contacted directly as more specific project-level information becomes available. Per conversation outlined in the City of King public hearing transcript (refer to **Appendix 2**), the commenter's contact information was collected.

Responses to Comment I-11:

Gomes, Val (oral comment)

- I-11.1 It appears that the commenter would like more information about the financing for the project. Chapter 11 of the Coast Corridor SDP (Appendix C) includes more information about funding. The SDP makes some general assumptions about relative capital costs, operating costs, and costs for different project components. None of the mid- and long-range components have been funded at this time. Approximately \$25 million in funding from the STIP and Proposition 1B is programmed to fund corridor-wide track and signaling upgrades. The financial status of the physical components has no bearing on the conclusions presented in the Draft Program EIS/EIR.
- I-11.2 It appears that the commenter would like to know if a cost/benefit analysis will be conducted for the project. Similarly to response to comment I-11.1, the requested financial information has no bearing on the conclusions presented in the Draft Program EIS/EIR; however, the SDP makes some general assumptions about relative capital costs, operating costs, and costs for different project components.

Responses to Comment I-12:

Greening, Eric (oral comment)

- I-12.1 The commenter asserts that property acquisitions would be required to implement the curve realignments that were included in the Build Alternative. The commenter further asserts that other alternatives, including tilt train technology and restoring previous sidings, would be less disruptive and would still accomplish more efficient rail service. With regard to safety, the commenter notes that geological conditions are unstable in some areas.

As noted in Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA and SLOCOG excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. Therefore, the cited property acquisitions would not occur in San Luis Obispo County.

Chapter 2.0 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR (Alternatives) includes FRA and SLOCOG's rationale for identifying the components that are evaluated in the environmental document.

Section 3.11, Geology, Soils, and Minerals, of the Draft Program EIS/EIR analyzes the geological environment with study area for the physical components. While susceptibility to geological hazards varies throughout the Corridor, it is important to note that the Coast Corridor already exists and operates passenger and freight rail service on a daily basis. Project components do not deviate far from the existing alignment, and are located within the same geologic setting. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies are proposed to lessen potential impacts.

Responses to Comment I-13:

Hayden, Celine

- I-13.1 FRA and SLOCOG appreciate the commenter's support for expanding passenger service on the Coast Corridor with the proposed Coast Daylight. The commenter asserts that the engine noise from the existing Coast Corridor service (via Coast Starlight) is loud when it idles in an existing siding near the commenter's property on Leff Street in San Luis Obispo. Likewise, the commenter requests that FRA include sound mitigation measures within this area to reduce the noise.

The commenter appears to be expressing concern about existing operations rather than one the adequacy of the analysis of project. FRA and SLOCOG will take this comment into consideration. To the extent project-level environmental review is needed for any physical components in the area, FRA and SLOCOG will consider possible noise reduction measures to address any significant impacts.

Responses to Comment I-14:

Jensen, Ross (oral comment)

- I-14.1 FRA and SLOCOG acknowledge the commenter's concern. See Master Response 3.

Responses to Comment I-15:

Kemp, Christine

- I-15.1 The commenter asked specific questions regarding the digitized aerial mapping (Google Earth) depicting the proposed alignment (available online). The specific questions were addressed via correspondence with Christina Watson at TAMC (a responsible agency of the project). See **Appendix 2** for more details. No further response is required. See Master Response 3 regarding the conceptual nature of physical components.
- I-15.2 Similarly to response to comment I-15.1, the commenter's specific question regarding proposed components between Salinas and Soledad was addressed via separate correspondence with Ms. Watson.

Responses to Comment I-16:

Kemp, Christine (oral comment)

- I-16.1 The commenter expresses concern regarding loss of agricultural land. Additionally, the commenter asserts concern about the public notification process. See Master Responses 3 and 4.

FRA has selected a Preferred Alternative consistent with its responsibility as the lead federal agency under NEPA. SLOCOG may, after certification of the EIR, choose to adopt the Preferred Alternative as the project under CEQA. These actions would provide program-level environmental clearance at both federal and state levels. As discussed in Master Response 3, if particular projects are carried forward and proposed for construction, project-level environmental review would need to be conducted at that time. The various components comprising the Build Alternative would require different approvals or permits to construct from a variety of federal, state, and local entities, as well as various federal and/or state permits. Local funding of many of the physical components would most likely be incorporated into the regional transportation plans prepared by TAMC and SLOCOG.

Responses to Comment I-17:

Kirkland, Gary (oral comment)

- I-17.1 In response to the commenter's question of who owns the railroad, the UPRR owns the railroad tracks between San Jose and San Luis Obispo, as discussed in **Chapter 1.0** of the Draft Program EIS/EIR (Purpose and Need). See Master Response 3 for clarification on the conceptual nature of Build and Preferred Alternative components.

The commenter also speaks to the merits of the project, but does not have a specific comment on the adequacy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. No further response can be provided due to the non-specific nature of the comments.

Responses to Comment I-18:

Lyon, Christopher (oral comments)

- I-18.1 See Master Response 3 for clarification on the conceptual nature of the proposed components and railroad ROW.
- I-18.2 See Master Response 4 for more information on public outreach efforts. See Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments.

Responses to Comment I-19:

May, Rachel

- I-19.1 See Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments. See also Master Responses 3 and 5 regarding the conceptual nature of the environmental document and existing Coast Starlight ridership.
- I-19.2 See Master Response 1 regarding the Atascadero Municipal Water District resources.

Responses to Comment I-20:

McLoughlin, Arthur (oral comment)

- I-20.1 FRA and SLOCOG appreciate the commenter's support for the project. The comment is noted.

Responses to Comment I-21:

Melendrez, Chantal Georis

- I-21.1 FRA and SLOCOG appreciate the commenter's support for the project. The comment is noted.

Responses to Comment Letter I-22:

Salter, Bettina (oral comment)

I-22.1 See Master Response 1 and Master Response 4.

Responses to Comment I-23:

Schneiderhan, Barbara

- I-23.1 See Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments.
- I-23.2 FRA and SLOCOG agree with the commenter that short siding areas can contribute to delays and congestion when passenger trains have for freight trains to pass, as discussed on page 1-6 of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. Passengers traveling on the existing Coast Starlight can often experience significant delays, owing to a largely single-track railroad with few sidings of the length necessary to accommodate the longer freight trains. As a result, the Build and Preferred Alternative components include potential siding extensions and switching/signaling components that if implemented would help reduce delays.
- I-23.3 See Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments.

Responses to Comment I-24:

Thompson, Nancy

- I-24.1 See Master Response 4 regarding public outreach efforts.
- I-24.2 See Master Response 1, the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA excludes all of the San Luis Obispo County curve realignments.
- I-24.3 This comment is noted. See Master Response 4 regarding public outreach efforts.

Responses to Comment I-25:

Veek, Edward (oral comment)

- I-25.1 The commenter speaks to the merits of the project, but does not have a specific comment on the adequacy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR. No response is required.

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